Reviewer's report

Title: Clostridium difficile 027 infection in Italy: where are we now and where are we going?

Version: 2 Date: 10 October 2012

Reviewer: Jesús Rodríguez-Baño

Reviewer's report:

This paper deals with CDi caused by C. difficile 027 in one referral center in Italy. This may be an important and emerging problem in many European countries after the outbreaks that occurred in Canada, USA and UK some months ago. The paper is well written.

Major compulsory revisions
1. Please include in the abstract where the cases came from (number of hospitals)
2. It would be important to know if the emergence of 027 cases increased the incidence of episodes of CDI (at least in the Lazzaro Spallanzani hospital, because they may not know in the others), meaning that 027 was able to add to previous "endemic" cases.
3. In the definition of healthcare-associated cases and community cases there is a gap for cases diagnosed >4 weeks and <3 months after a hospital admission. How were these defined?
4. Please clarify that all other usual aetiologies of acute diarrhoea were excluded by conventional culture. This is particularly important in the community-acquired case, which is really interesting.
5. The number of relapses is probably wrong; if there were 5 patients who relapsed, and 2 of them had 4 and 6 episodes, the sum should be at least 14, not 12.
6. I think it would be necessary to provide more epidemiological data: from how many centers did the cases come from, and in which wards were they admitted? An epidemic curve would help. Was there a clear relationship between the cases?
7. How were the patients treated? This is key to understand the high rate of recurrences, beyond the fact that 027 is known for increasing the risk.
8. The fact that CD was not cultured, identified and typed should be acknowledged as an additional limitation.

Minor essential revisions
None

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests